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## Second Committee

**Summary record of the 33rd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 3 November 2011, at 3 p.m.

*Chair*: Mr. Donckel (Vice-Chair) ..... (Luxembourg)

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*In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Donckel (Luxembourg), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 29: People's empowerment and a peace-centric development model** (A/66/197)

1. **Mr. Hanif** (Acting Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)) said that, since the 2005 World Summit, a growing emphasis on the deep interlinkages between peace, development and human rights had permeated the work of the United Nations system. The agenda item under consideration would help the Second Committee to consider the relevant issues in an integrated manner and would thereby contribute to addressing the development challenges that countries were currently facing from a broader perspective. Acknowledging the leadership of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in launching the initiative, he said that the Second Committee special event organized on 18 October 2011 on "People's empowerment: a peace model" had highlighted core issues related to the relevant activities of the Organization. The Committee's deliberations would guide that work in coming years and relevant reports would be presented at subsequent sessions.

2. **Mr. Suarez Salvia** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that people's empowerment was essential to overcoming the challenges the world faced. Even where it was high, economic growth did not necessarily translate into development. State wealth, even in the richer countries, could not guarantee the social protection of the citizens. To achieve social and economic development, people's empowerment was indispensable at all stages of decision-making and norm-setting. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh had rightly identified a number of interlinked elements of peoples' empowerment and development, namely eradicating poverty and hunger, reducing inequality, mitigating deprivation, creating jobs for all, integrating excluded groups, accelerating human development and combating terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations. The Group would submit a draft resolution on the subject.

3. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that, in many countries, high economic growth had failed to translate into people's empowerment. Correcting that situation required people's empowerment in decision-making and norm setting. Contrary to the principles of social justice, millions of people were unable to meet their basic needs and remained disempowered and voiceless. The systematic exclusion of selected groups and persons from employment opportunities was an impediment to socioeconomic stability. Eradicating poverty and hunger, reducing inequality and promoting the active participation of all members of society in social, economic and political activities were essential for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

4. The 2005 World Summit on Social Development and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals had recognized that development, security and human rights were interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Political leaders should articulate a clear vision of inclusiveness and mobilize the collective will needed to support that vision through a coherent approach to economic and social policies based on participation and accountability.

5. **Mr. Lakhal** (Tunisia) said that citizens' political, social and economic empowerment was crucial to sustainable peace, which in turn constituted a multidimensional prerequisite for human development. Tunisia's first free and transparent elections had shown that healthy and rules-based democratic processes made everything work better. Yet in a world where billions were affected by extreme poverty, unemployment, hunger and disease and millions lived under foreign occupation and were deprived of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, peace could well remain a distant dream. Lasting peace required the establishment of social justice both nationally and internationally.

**Agenda item 19: Sustainable development** (*continued*) (A/66/87, A/66/297, A/66/298 and Corr.1, A/66/337, A/66/388, A/66/391)

**(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (*continued*) (A/66/287, A/66/304, A/C.2/66/2)

**(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small**

**Island Developing States** (*continued*) (A/66/218, A/66/278)

**(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction** (*continued*) (A/66/301)

**(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind** (*continued*) (A/66/291)

**(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa** (*continued*) (A/66/291)

**(f) Convention on Biological Diversity** (*continued*) (A/66/291)

**(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-sixth session** (*continued*) (A/66/25)

**(h) Harmony with Nature** (*continued*) (A/66/302)

**(i) Sustainable mountain development** (*continued*) (A/66/294)

**(j) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy** (*continued*) (A/66/306)

6. **Mr. Dabiré** (Burkina Faso) said that the challenges faced by Burkina Faso as a developing country, such as rising commodity prices, were compounded by the effects of climate change, which increasingly constituted a serious threat to development. Faced with alternating floods and drought, Burkina Faso welcomed the implementation of the Africa Adaptation Programme, supported by Japan, and had launched an accelerated growth and sustainable development strategy as a reference framework for all development-related action.

7. His delegation was concerned at the course that discussions relating to the new concept of green economy, to be taken up at Rio+20 were taking, and would welcome reassurance that the concept would contribute to the elimination of poverty.

8. In the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, he stressed that poverty reduction strategies should address the problem of land degradation. The synergies between the three Rio Conventions should be strengthened with a view to adopting an integrated approach to climate, biodiversity, desertification and sustainable development. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should adopt a legal instrument in order to ensure sustainable land management in all countries, and that a global strategy should be launched to promote such management.

9. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that the international community should adopt a comprehensive, balanced, effective and consistent response to the current environmental problems and strengthen cooperation based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It should also support the continuation of negotiations in accordance with the Bali road map and promote the full implementation of the Cancún Agreements, particularly in relation to the Green Climate Fund, technology transfer and assistance for adaptation to climate change. The mechanisms for combating deforestation should be made operational, and a global agreement on climate change to succeed the Kyoto Protocol for the period after 2012 should be concluded, while consideration should be given to improving global governance in the area of climate-related issues in order to prevent minorities from blocking the negotiations.

10. Rio+20 offered an opportunity to accelerate transition to the green economy through specific practical solutions in the areas of climate change, loss of biodiversity, drought and land degradation. Such a transition entailed major changes to the current economic system and therefore presupposed a clear definition of the green economy and its implementation strategies, including for combating desertification and land degradation, costs, real advantages and possible risks, together with new economic and social principles, appropriate financing and a system for regulating the world economy in order to ensure consistency and sustainability. There were currently more international environmental governance bodies than necessary and the resulting inefficiency indicated the need for an overall structure to ensure coherent implementation of the relevant instruments.

11. **Mr. Empole** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) stressed the need for international solidarity in the face of climate change with a view to developing appropriate technology in the countries affected, funding adaptation and mitigation projects and building relevant capacities in the most vulnerable economies. The United Nations should coordinate all such international initiatives. Rio+20 would afford an

opportunity for the international economy to promote the green economy with a view to eradicating poverty and ensuring social progress for humanity as a whole; and to support sustainable development by strengthening the capacities of the organizations of the United Nations system, improving the coordination of their activities and creating a global organization for environmental protection.

12. In recent years, his Government had sought to ensure sustainable management of its forests in order to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, stem deforestation and reduce poverty. A post-conflict environmental assessment of the country published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had identified successful initiatives and strategic opportunities, and estimated that meeting the current challenges faced by the country required a doubling of the development assistance it received. Environmental projects would absorb US$ 200 million. The enhanced United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+), to which his Government was already committed, was expected to generate the funding needed to address such problems as deforestation, species extinction, heavy metal pollution and land degradation due to mining and drought, and severe drinking water shortages. He called upon potential partners to assist his Government in reversing the country's environmental degradation.

13. **Mr. Zdorov** (Belarus) said that the complexity of developing new and renewable energy sources required national and international action within the framework of a global energy strategy. The creation of a United Nations global fund based on voluntary contributions by States, civil society organizations and the private sector could be a key element in a mechanism that, by enhancing the accessibility of environment-friendly energy technologies at lower cost, would contribute to their dissemination and universal use and to the development of a green economy. To function effectively, that mechanism should cooperate with other relevant initiatives, such as, inter alia, the International Renewable Energy Agency and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

14. It was important to promote the development of technologies and the supporting infrastructure in developing countries, including the least developed and middle-income countries, inter alia by increasing cooperation among technology transfer centres. An example was the UNIDO project for such a centre for the Eurasian Economic Community.

15. Belarus strove to contribute to resolving problems of sustainable development, including climate change, in a practical manner; it had initiated an amendment to Kyoto Protocol annex B which established a quantitative greenhouse gas emissions target for the country, and it urged the States parties to the Protocol to accelerate their internal procedures in order to support the relevant international efforts.

16. **Mr. Tatah** (Cameroon) said that, although the importance of mountains as biological and cultural diversity centres had been confirmed since the adoption of Agenda 21, the people of mountainous areas continued to suffer from the degradation of their ecosystems and, as a result, from vulnerability to natural risks and loss of biodiversity. Cameroon had developed projects and programmes aimed at the rational utilization of the resources of those ecosystems, which included sources of rivers essential to the population's well-being, and hoped that Rio+20 would stress the importance of a holistic approach, taking into consideration the economic, social and cultural needs of the population in mountainous zones. In view of the high costs of development projects in such areas, Cameroon invited Governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, the Global Environment Fund, the private sector and all other interested parties to provide appropriate support in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/205.

17. **Archbishop Francis Chullikatt** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the international community must consider the environment's impact on the poor, on future generations and on humanity as a whole. It could not pass on to future generations a world depleted of its natural resources or increasingly vulnerable to the damaging effects of climate change. Responsible stewardship of the natural environment implied protecting nature from purely mercantile exploitation; full enjoyment of the land, water resources and clean air that all human beings needed in order to survive; and productive use of new possibilities, such as innovative farming techniques respectful of the environment and attentive to the needs of the most indigent. The economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources should first be recognized by those responsible, not be borne by

countries with no liability for such costs or by future generations. To intervene only with economic incentives and deterrents or by educating society was not enough so long as there was a lack of respect for life in the human family. The current approach to environmental protection lacked a coherent plan for society, and humanity should overcome that serious flaw.

18. **Ms. Barth** (International Labour Organization) said that productive employment and decent work were keys to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Transition to a greener economy was necessary for sustainable development in general, and from a social and labour market perspective in particular. In order to achieve satisfactory results, Rio+20 must give high priority to new initiatives that accelerated poverty eradication and the transition to more sustainable production and consumption patterns. The Green Jobs Initiative, which was premised on the Decent Work Agenda, provided an important model for seizing the opportunities available in the developed and developing countries to shape a new investment strategy for sustainable development focused on the replacement of old, unsustainable technologies with new, cleaner ones. The transition to more sustainable production and consumption processes required close cooperation among Governments, organized workers and employers. The ILO's unique tripartite structure and its capacity to promote and facilitate social dialogue represented a particularly powerful mechanism that could catalyse the necessary changes. There were synergies between a greener economy and the need to create more and better jobs: it was not necessary to choose between the environment on the one hand and employment and growth on the other. Both would be achieved by green, clean and sustainable action and the creation of sustainable enterprises. That topic could be further discussed in preparing a successful outcome to Rio+20.

19. **Ms. Sommer** (World Food Programme (WFP)) stressed the importance of addressing disaster risk and food security in a comprehensive manner that would build resilience among the most vulnerable communities and countries. Disasters were a leading cause of hunger and affected all dimensions of food security, including economic and physical access to food, the availability and stability of supplies, and nutrition. When affected by disasters, food-insecure households often resorted to detrimental coping strategies, such as reducing food quality and consumption, cutting down on expenditures on health care and education, adopting environmentally harmful practices, selling productive assets and engaging in distress migration. Scaling up efforts to achieve food security and address the increasing risk of disasters was a critical priority for Governments. WFP supported Governments and the poorest and most food-insecure people through food assistance and disaster risk reduction efforts, including help in implementing advanced early warning and monitoring systems that tracked food security, nutrition, market indicators and natural hazards, and improving disaster preparedness, prevention and response.

20. **Ms. Muedin** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that migration was critical to any comprehensive strategy for sustainable development. While Agenda 21 had proposed measures with regard to environment-related migration, the challenges had since become more complex. For instance, adequate urban planning presupposed addressing rural-urban migration flows through, inter alia, sustainable settlements and inclusive social development. International assistance might be necessary in order to build capacities to that end.

21. Population movements caused by land degradation should be met with targeted responses with the support of the international community. Managing movement by instituting temporary or circular migration policies could alleviate the impact on fragile ecosystems and increase the long-term resilience of environments. Mainstreaming migration into disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies was critical to minimizing forced movement. Cooperation in that area could be facilitated by designating national and regional focal points for the Hyogo Framework for Action. In view of the strong evidence linking population mobility and sustainable development, the Rio+20 outcome should reflect an inclusive future for all populations, whether mobile or not.

22. **Mr. Bredel** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that dealing with the chronic challenges faced by developing countries and countries in transition with regard to energy access and security required a much greater role for renewable energy in national energy strategies. To that end, support and commitment were required of all key stakeholders. UNIDO played a key role in

coordinating the relevant efforts of the United Nations system and worked closely with Member States to promote the development, transfer and deployment of innovative, resource-efficient and low-carbon technologies as part of a broader green industry initiative, with special emphasis on solar photovoltaics, solar water heating, wind turbines, small hydropower, methane from waste, and biomass applications for power and heat production. It also supported demonstration programmes, capacity-building, scaling up and replication of locally relevant renewable energy solutions, and the promotion of renewable energy markets. In coming years, UNIDO's support to Member States would focus on promoting private sector investment in market-based renewable energy projects. Public-private partnerships were crucial to that end.

23. **Mr. Jilani** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the specific contribution of IFRC to sustainable development focused on strengthening communities and supporting their ability to recover from recurrent or prolonged disasters and crises. Given the increased number of disasters, there was a need to enhance disaster preparedness and disaster response at the local and national levels and to address long-term and chronic issues, particularly in countries most vulnerable to disasters, climate change and environmental risks, such as small island developing States.

24. IFRC had developed a performance framework for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in order to facilitate relevant national strategies through the use of appropriate indicators. The results of three cost-benefit analyses conducted in Nepal, the Philippines and Sudan had shown that properly implemented community-based disaster risk reduction programmes were cost-effective. Accordingly, such programmes were currently being implemented by most national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. Moreover, IFRC was considering new funding instruments, such as a community safety and resilience fund and the allocation of at least 10 per cent of international disaster response funds to disaster risk reduction. Any future framework for sustainable development must include disaster and climate risk management. National legislation could clarify responsibilities, guide the deployment of adequate resources, address underlying vulnerability factors, and empower communities to play an active role in reducing their exposure to disaster risks. IFRC, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, was developing relevant model legislation.

25. **Ms. Persic** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that, although an important means of achieving the ultimate aim of sustainable development, namely human well-being and respect for the environment, the green economy was not enough. The multifaceted challenges and risks called for a comprehensive response to global social, economic and environmental issues, and for the creation of fair, equitable and inclusive green societies.

26. Greater support was needed to assist African efforts for peace, democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development and gender equality. Investing in education, especially for women and girls, was crucial to achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, equity and inclusiveness. Science, technology and innovation policies were a key instrument for promoting green technologies and for encouraging capacity-building and scientific careers, in particular for youth and women. Cross-cutting science-based policies were needed to link the environmental, social and economic aspects of ocean governance and mitigate the rapid degradation of the sea. Safe drinking water for all was a high priority, and addressing the looming water crisis required strengthening education, training, capacity-building and awareness-raising efforts for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. Promoting biodiversity, for instance through the UNESCO biosphere reserves, was essential to poverty reduction and sustainable development. A holistic approach, taking scientific, educational, socio-cultural and ethical dimensions into account, was a key to addressing climate change challenges, including migration linked to climate change. Systematically integrating cultural specificities into the design, measurement and practice of development was imperative. Well-informed media formed an essential platform for debate and facilitated governance and accountability in favour of sustainable green societies and economies. There was a need for a more coherent institutional framework at the global, regional and national levels. Sustainable development and peace were intrinsically interconnected.

27. **Ms. Arditi Manzo** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that disaster prevention projects carried out by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in various countries included reinforcing structures against earthquakes and cyclones, constructing flood-safe emergency shelters and training village emergency teams and volunteers in the establishment of early warning systems. The Order also intervened in the aftermath of natural disasters through relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. The Order's disaster prevention projects included training children and youth in techniques designed to help keep their communities safe; organizing related drills for young persons; and promoting public awareness of disaster risks and access to information necessary for risk management at the local level.

28. **Mr. Bukuru** (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) stressed that land was the planet's life support and the resource base for food production. As Rio+20 approached, it was necessary to focus on the least developed countries in order to ensure nutrition for the earth's increasing population.

*The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.*